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Verification in all its aspects, including the role of the United Nations in the field of verification

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Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

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II. Replies received from Governments

Bolivia

[Original: Spanish]
[5 April 2006]

General Assembly resolution 59/60 of 3 December 2004 reaffirms the critical importance of and the vital contribution that has been made by effective verification measures in non-proliferation, arms limitation and disarmament agreements and other similar obligations.

Bolivia considers that the most effective mechanism for ensuring non-proliferation, arms limitation and disarmament is verification of compliance by States parties with their commitments.

The role of the United Nations in verification activities is vital in order to build the necessary level of confidence within the international community.

Bolivia believes that dialogue and negotiation are the best means of resolving disputes.

Moreover, given the current threats to the international system, arms control and verification is crucial in combating terrorism and transnational organized crime.

In keeping with its pacifist policy and with the global initiative for disarmament and non-proliferation, Bolivia supports the work of the international agencies of the United Nations system to promote disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy with a view to ensuring international peace and security.

Cuba

[Original: Spanish]
[23 June 2006]

The Republic of Cuba considers that verification is a vitally important process that helps to foster the necessary confidence in relations between States and to gauge compliance with non-proliferation, arms limitation, arms control and disarmament agreements.

Any disarmament agreement that provides for practical verification measures must be preceded by a formal undertaking by the States parties to refrain completely from the threat or use of force, whether exercised unilaterally or on the basis of an alliance, irrespective of whether such an undertaking forms part of their other international obligations.

The verification process should uphold the principle of confidentiality, be minimally intrusive and respect, and in no case endanger, the national security of States. Verification should also be objective and transparent. All States should receive the same treatment.

Cuba considers that every disarmament agreement should establish its own verification system and place particular emphasis on measures for consultation, cooperation and clarification of doubts.

Nothing should limit the right of States parties to comment and vote on issues that directly or indirectly concern them. Verification should be based on non-discriminatory and non-selective principles. All States have the same right to participate in the verification processes established under the agreements to which they are parties.

Verification is not an end in itself, but a means of ensuring that all parties comply with agreements.

As part of disarmament agreements, verification measures should apply only to those States that are parties to such agreements, and should in no case affect other States.

The verification system established under the Convention on Chemical Weapons and the verification measures employed by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) may be used as a basis for other disarmament agreements.

The Republic of Cuba reaffirms its support for the 16 principles of verification drawn up by the United Nations Disarmament Commission (General Assembly resolution 43/81 B).

The Republic of Cuba reiterates that verification agreements should be applied without discrimination and in a manner that avoids any undue interference in the internal affairs of States parties and any impediment to the full exercise by all States of the right to social and economic development and access to technology.

Finland

[Original: English]
[28 April 2006]

Finland attaches great importance to verification in the field of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation and supports the enhancement of verification-related capacities of the United Nations. As new threats to disarmament regimes emerge and new means to verify compliance become available, an international discussion on verification, in all its aspects, becomes even more necessary.

A number of useful contributions from Member States towards the work of the 2006 Panel of Governmental Experts on this subject have already been made. To support the work of the Panel, Finland would like to offer the following additional comments and looks forward to the publication of the Panel's results and the subsequent discussion at the United Nations.

Existing verification arrangements in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation leave significant lacunae to be filled by new efforts of the international community. Besides the weakness of verification tools in the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and slow progress with the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, fissile materials and missiles lack a regime and thus also verification arrangements. Verification also remains a challenge in the field of conventional weapons. These shortfalls should be addressed through relevant treaty regimes but also through strengthening the verification capacities of the United Nations, especially the Secretary-General.

For reasons of effectiveness, Finland considers it important that future strengthening of United Nations verification capacities make full use of expertise gathered, methods developed and lessons learned in past and ongoing United Nations verification work, in particular that of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission. Existing resources — roster of trained experts, Headquarters staff, recruitment and training system, investigation methods as well as data collection and management tools — should not be lost. That requires action at the level of the United Nations but also nationally in its Member States.

One existing United Nations mechanism that should be built upon is the investigative mechanism of the Secretary-General regarding the alleged use of biological and chemical weapons. Member States should maintain and regularly update the lists of experts and laboratories that they have notified to the mechanism, and the Department for Disarmament Affairs secretariat should regularly remind Member States of that duty. Preparations should also be launched with a view to enhancing the working procedures of the mechanism.

To ensure effectiveness, reliability, credibility and legitimacy for United Nations verification work, it is important that experts nominated to the Secretary-General mechanism as well as other personnel involved in United Nations verification work be highly professional and competent. Training and exercises are important tools for enhancing and maintaining necessary skills. Legitimacy of verification arrangements also depends on jointly agreed and transparent investigation procedures as well as scientifically validated investigation techniques, equipment and tests. These, in turn, call for promotion of international laboratory networks and exchange of scientists. Finally, United Nations verification work should follow relevant scientific and technical developments and make use of new capacities such as mobile field laboratories.

Finland considers it important that the United Nations take into account ongoing verification-related work, experience gained and lessons learned in other international organizations, such as the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the International Atomic Energy Agency. On the chemical weapons side, the Secretary-General should liaise with the OPCW to benefit from the lessons it has learned from its regular industry inspections, maintaining capacity for the so-called challenge inspections and exercising procedures in cases of alleged use. The role and potential of the OPCW-designated laboratories network should also be considered. As regards biological weapons, the strengthening of United Nations verification capacities should take into account any future developments in the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. Networking with other relevant international organizations, in particular the World Health Organization, should also be carefully examined.

Several arms control and disarmament agreements, commitments and arrangements include provisions on confidence-building measures or other information exchange, such as reporting for the Committee established under Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). Finland views these exchanges as an important element of verification regimes, both of conventional and non-conventional weapons, and emphasizes the importance of timely, accurate and comprehensive participation. In addition to information exchange among States parties, Finland underlines the importance of transparency and public information more generally. Transparency concerning the implementation of arms control and

disarmament commitments provides the public with an opportunity to contribute to verification and should also strengthen public support to arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

Lebanon

[Original: Arabic]
[25 April 2006 and 16 May 2006]

With reference to the above matter and note, the Ministry of Defence hereby informs you that Lebanon reiterates its support for all international initiatives and agreements aimed at disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons that constitute a grave threat to peace and security in this region and the world, as well as its adherence to international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Lebanon also affirms that it possesses no weapons of mass destruction and that it supports the implementation of all effective deterrent measures to curb their proliferation.

With reference to the above matter and note, the Ministry draws attention to Lebanon's affirmation of the following:

- Lebanon possesses no weapons of mass destruction and is in compliance with United Nations resolutions prohibiting the use or acquisition of such weapons by terrorists;
- Lebanon provides no assistance of any kind to any group that seeks to manufacture, acquire, transport, transfer or use weapons of mass destruction;
- Lebanon has introduced laws and regulations that allow for monitoring of the export, transit and cross-border movement of weapons of all kinds, prohibit trafficking in such weapons and provide for the prosecution of terrorists, the harbouring of whom is forbidden under Lebanese law;
- Lebanon has signed ten international agreements relating to terrorism, is a member of the Financial Action Task Force on Money-laundering (FATF), which is connected with the financing of terrorism, and has created a mechanism whereby banking confidentiality may be lifted from accounts suspected of concealing financing for terrorist activities;
- Lebanon has contributed to the global efforts against terrorism but remains concerned about links between terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, especially since such weapons are at the disposal of Israeli terrorism.

Panama

[Original: Spanish]
[5 June 2006]

The Republic of Panama supports all multilateral efforts aimed at non-proliferation, arms limitation and disarmament, and therefore considers that the General Assembly's initiative to establish effective verification measures to ensure

compliance with the relevant agreements is entirely viable and deserving of Panama's support.

Portugal

[Original: English]
[2 May 2006]

Portugal considers that adequate and reliable verification in the field of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation activities and regimes is an essential tool to guarantee their effectiveness and is an indispensable means to build and maintain confidence among the international community.

A comprehensive set of verification measures enshrined in the treaties, conventions and regimes to which Portugal has adhered to, e.g., the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Missile Technology Control Regime, the Zängger Committee, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (though the latter is in the process of strengthening its verification procedures) already entered into force, or are about to be implemented.

In this regard, we consider that verification should be a concern of each and every country and that this concept should apply to all the appropriate non-proliferation and disarmament regimes. The issue of vital importance to the whole of the international community should be a matter of common endeavour. In this regard, we favour the initiative of setting up a panel of government experts established to explore the question of verification in all its aspects.

However, prior to establishing such a panel, it is essential to clearly define its mandate, objectives, scope and the respective financing procedures.

Moreover, we believe that the role of the United Nations in the field of verification should be retained and strengthened, through the enforcement of the relevant procedures of treaties, conventions and regimes in the field of non-proliferation and disarmament, as appropriate.

We consider that the panel of governmental experts should refrain from proposing new instruments or bodies for the purpose of verification, but rather to suggest possible ways and means to improve the effectiveness of the existing ones.

Qatar

[Original: Arabic]
[13 June 2006]

Reply of the State of Qatar

In connection with the implementation of various resolutions in the area of disarmament and international security adopted by the General Assembly, during its current (sixtieth) session, on reports of the First Committee, the Government of the State of Qatar wishes to provide the following information relating to verification in all its aspects, including the role of the United Nations in the field of verification:

- The State of Qatar has drafted legislation and laws to curb the proliferation of nuclear weapons and ensure the implementation of disarmament agreements and other agreements, in addition to which it has adopted and enforced effective measures for the establishment of domestic controls to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery;

- The State of Qatar has also created a compulsory mechanism for full implementation of all agreements concluded with international organizations.

(former) Serbia and Montenegro

[Original: English]
[31 May 2006]

Serbia and Montenegro considers that it is necessary to conduct a professional and in-depth risk analysis in the region.

There is an awareness of the long-term character of the fight against new challenges which requires a step-by-step approach. The principles and instruments of verification both at the bilateral and global levels represent an effective tool for the suppression and reduction of risks and threats.

The verification goals should not be conducive only to the reduction of the risk of the outbreak of war but also to the reduction of the scope of violence in wars. Positive and instructive examples are various aspects of verification established at the subregional level in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, where with the assistance of verification instruments soon after the end of conflicts a stable level of mutual trust among States has been established.

The United Nations commitment to consistent implementation of General Assembly resolutions 60/64 and 60/75 of 8 December 2005 may induce certain countries, faced with crises and challenges, to recognize and establish verification regimes as an instrument of prevention.

The role and influence of the United Nations in the fight against proliferation and commitment to disarmament are recognizable and indisputable.

In line with the above, Serbia and Montenegro supports General Assembly resolutions 59/60, 60/64 and 60/75.

Suriname

[Original: English]
[30 May 2006]

Suriname does not possess any weapons of mass destruction, does not plan to purchase any of those weapons in the near future and does not support countries that do possess or plan to use them.

The Surinamese Ministry of Defense promotes arms control and disarmament measures of the United Nations and shares the view that verification is essential in analysing the behaviour of countries in accordance with the provisions in these

agreements. However, in the verification process the 16 principles of verification should always be taken into account and should be implemented:

- Without discrimination (verification should not apply only to third world or less developed countries but every country that is party to these agreements). It is also very important that a minimum construction be made to enable the United Nations to carry out obligations in non-signatory countries which possess, or countries that are suspected of possessing, weapons of mass destruction
- Without too much interference in internal affairs
- Without jeopardizing the economic, social and technological development of a country.

The request for inspections or information in accordance with the provisions of an arms limitation or disarmament agreement should only be used to determine if a country is acting in conformity with these agreements and should not be abused.

The Surinamese Ministry of Defense has taken note of the various proposals of the Disarmament Commissions and shares the view that:

- The establishment of a verification database within the United Nations is essential (to see the position of another State party)
- The role of the United Nations is very important, starting with research into the process, procedures and techniques of verification as well as the request to the Secretary-General to look into these matters
- On a responsive basis and with the consent of State parties to arms limitation and disarmament agreements, involvement of the United Nations in the formulation and implementation of verification provisions of specific agreements is very important.

States parties to arms limitations or disarmament agreements need to see the importance of verification in all its aspects and should give their full cooperation when they are called upon by the United Nations.